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Interview with Phillip Agee by William Brown and Harold Leap,
January 11, 1978, in Kingston, Jamaica, at Hotel Pagesas, Rm 253.

Key: A - Agee

Time: 9:50 p.m.

B - Brown

L - Leap

Present are Phillip Agee, William Brown and Harold Leap,
Staff Investigators.

This is the story of the - as I know it - of the photographs
and other information relating to the visit of Oswald to
Mexico City a few weeks, I think, before the assassination
of President Kennedy. At the time of the assassination I
was in Quito, Ecuador, on assignment and I never learned of
this story until I returned to Washington on transfer in
September, 1966. At that time, I was assigned to the Mexico
Branch of the Western Hemisphere Division of the CIA Clandes-
tine Services. Because of a change in the office locations
of various parts of the Clandestine Services in the Langley
Headquarters Building, the Mexico Branch and the Cuban Operations
Branch were not at Langley working but were in the Ames Building
in Rosslyn and for the period from the time of my assignment
in September to the Mexico Branch until about November, we
were working out of the Ames Building and in fact the Branch
had been there for some months before I had arrived, and then
about November we moved back out to Langley, and all of the
officers involved in the headquarters support to the operations
underway in Mexico City or in Mexico, under the Mexico City

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Station would have to go from time to time out to Langley to deal with the other offices of the CIA on various matters relating to the different cases we were trying to give support to in Washington. Now, the person who taught me my job when I arrived was a woman named I think she goes by the last name She is still around, I think, and I believe she appointed abroad. And in fact you will find in David Phillips' book, called The Night Watch, ... you know who David Phillips is I'm sure ... where

It would be about time now for her to have been transferred back to Washington. She is about 50 or so, but you can find all of her biographic data in the most recent biographic register of the Department of State which would be 1974. And in this you will see her place and date of birth, and the fact that she had some job in the government for a long period of time, probably Department of the Army or Department of Defense Research Analyst, something like that, she was assigned to the Department of State. And in fact she went down to Mexico City when I was still there in 1968 and eventually she ended up

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of all of the paperwork and other administrative matters relating to the support in Washington to these operations which were underway in Mexico City. And they included observation posts around the Soviet Embassy and around the Cuban Embassy. Around the Soviet Embassy there were three observation posts

called and so on and so forth, each of the different agents and projects had these cryptonyms. Well, was in charge of the support work in Washington for what are known as the Operational Support Projects, which meant surveillance teams, , various things like that, and because there had been a gap between my arrival and the departure of my predecessor in this job on the Soviet support operations, she had taken those over, so she turned them over to me. I don't recall exactly when it was that I heard this story about the photographs of Oswald, but somewhere along the way,

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someone in the Branch, told me
about what happened on the day of the assassination of
Kennedy, because I think
Washington on the Mexico Branch and she was at that time
also working in the same types of operations like the tele-
phone tapping, the observation posts, surveillance teams,
those sorts of what is known in the CIA as operational
support projects. The story went that just as the word
came out in the news that Kennedy had been shot, and then
later when Oswald's name first came up, that she recalled
having seen the name of Oswald and photographs of Oswald
taken by one of the observation posts a few weeks earlier.
Because what would happen is, and I don't remember for sure,
right now whether it was the Cuban Embassy or whether it
was the Soviet Embassy. I tend to feel it was the Soviet
Embassy where they took the photograph, or photographs,
however many there were. They had these three observation
posts, one of them was more or less across the street from
the main entrance to the Soviet Embassy. Another one was
down on the other end of the block which was not a main
entrance but which gave access to the main doorway because
the Embassy was a big mansion set behind a high wall and there
were trees around. And the third observation post was in the
back along a side street and

and they would take photographs

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of the Soviets out there playing volleyball or sitting or walking around or whatever.

But the story went that

within a matter of an hour or two

photograph of Oswald visiting the Embassy, and here/I'm pretty sure it's the Soviet Embassy rather than Cuban Embassy. And I

don't know, don't recall in fact, how she had been able to or how they were able to reconcile
reconcile/in Mexico City the photograph with the name, unless someone had known the face. Because the problem with these

observation posts is that you can get a lot of photographs from them, but to find out the exact identity of the people

in the photographs is not always an easy thing to do. And it may be that as they were listening to the telephones of

the Soviet Embassy, and also the Cuban Embassy, that she remembered the name Oswald /from the telephone tap, if in

fact he had identified himself over the telephone, and tried to make an appointment with the consul or whoever. And

then they were able somehow to reconcile the telephone conversation with the photograph that was taken from the

observation post the same day or more or less whenever the appointment was made. On the other hand/^{it may be} that this photograph

had not been identified until the time of the assassination but that she had heard or recalled perhaps either reading the transcript from the telephone tapping or getting a

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condensed report perhaps a weekly report or something of the take from the telephone tap that she remembered the name Lee Harvey Oswald and then went back into the files of all the photographs and looked through all the photographs until eventually she found a photograph that was similar to all the photographs of Oswald that immediately began to come over the television and the news services. So those details I don't remember exactly, but I do recall that it was considered a coup of some sort for her to act so fast in the digging out of the photograph and the information on Oswald's visit to Mexico City the very afternoon of the assassination. Now, one of the standard procedures for the Agency was to use these observation posts to photograph the license plates of the automobiles which would park at or near the Soviet Embassy, especially those which had U.S. plates - people who had driven down from Texas or wherever. And I don't know whether Oswald drove or whether he took the bus or however he got down there, but normally the license plate number would be passed to our office of security in headquarters and they would then make the appropriate check in whatever state it was to get the name and any other data available on the holder of the license plate or the owner of the car that had the license plate and then an additional investigation perhaps would be made before writing a memorandum to the FBI on the person and on the visit to the installation in Mexico City. Now in the case of Oswald, if in fact he had called by telephone and said "this is Lee Harvey Oswald, and I want to make an appointment with the

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Reference copy, JFK Collection: BSCA (RG 233)

consul or someone in the Embassy or I want to go to the Soviet Union", or if in fact he had called the Cuban Embassy and said "I want to go to Cuba", and I remember hearing one version of the story, not in the CIA but later on, after I was out of the CIA, in fact I think it was, that he had tried to go to Cuba and that the Cubans had turned him down, and that he had gone then to the Soviets to try to get them to intercede with the Cubans. I don't remember where I got that story, but there may have been this name appearing on the transcript of telephone tapping of the Cuban Embassy, or the Cuban Consulate, and also of the Soviet Embassy or Soviet Consulate. And I don't remember how many telephone, different telephone lines they had, and how many of them were tapped at any one particular time. I would think that normally they would all be tapped, all the time. And if there is an American who comes up on these lines making contact with these Embassies, just as in the case with the license plates, the agency would then try to find out who the person was and what his political antecedents were. The normal procedure would be to first make a name check in the CIA and this is a procedure for checking all of the CIA files to try to get some trace on the individual involved.

L: May I ask you a question - would the CIA station have Oswald's name on record prior to him arriving in Mexico City?

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There wouldn't be any trace of his name in Mexico City itself unless he had been involved in something relating to Mexico. If he had been there before, for example, for some operational purpose if he was actually working for the agency or if he had been down there in touch with the Soviets.

The fact that he was a defector - would his name be of record in the various countries where we have stations?

His name -- if he had been a defector to the Soviet Union -- that alone wouldn't suffice to have his name in the records of Mexico City Station

any station which didn't have a direct operational participation in the case, whether he was a bonafide defector or whether in fact he had been recruited by the CIA to go to the Soviet Union. But unless the station had a direct participation in the operation, then there would be no reason for them to stuff their files with cards for example that they wouldn't need. Now, you ought to know how the station files are set up.

B: O.K., hold it. Lets get back first to the photograph. Now, you said that

A:

B: Right, O.K. You said she reconciled the picture once she heard the name. Would you tell me what do you mean by "reconcile"?

A: Well, I would assume that in Mexico City and I say assume because I didn't ever work directly in these operations in Mexico City. I simply did a support function in Washington and didn't actually handle the production from the operations. But I would assume

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that they would get a lot of photographs of people they couldn't identify. And they would try to take the photographs, and of course with the photograph comes the date and time that it was taken -- of the person entering and leaving the Soviet Embassy or the Cuban Embassy. Because not only are photographs taken but a log is kept and the log records the entry of people to the Embassy, both to the Embassy staff and their local employees and visitors. And if you read the log, some people are identified and some are not, and these logs are kept - lets see, how can I put it -- they are kept consistent with the photographs so that if a person X goes in at a certain time, then you have "see photo" or something like that, then you have the photograph that applies to the particular entry in the log, of the person going in or coming out. The same applies with the cars and the license plates. So I would assume that at the time of the assassination they might have had Oswald on the telephone lines, but I wouldn't think they would have had in Mexico City or in the Mexico Branch of the Western Hemisphere Division, anyone who would look through the photographs and suddenly recognize it. Say this is Lee Harvey Oswald, the guy who went to the Soviet Union. That's not impossible, but I would be kind of surprised if that were the case.

L: Did you personally see the picture
as Oswald?

identified

Reference copy, JFK Collection

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I can't remember whether I saw it or not, because I had the files of the observation posts over the Soviet Embassy and there was another officer whose name was

there until early in 1966 or middle of 1966, when they closed the office. And he came up to work in Washington.

was in charge of the Mexico Branch in Washington, support to the operations against the Cubans in Mexico City, just as I was in charge of the ones against the Soviets. And if it was in fact, if the photograph was in fact taken at the Cuban Embassy, then would have been the person in charge of that type of operation, although as I say,

didn't get into that job until about just a little about when I went into mine. So he wasn't there at the time of the assassination I don't think. But as I was in charge of the files and of these projects including the observation posts, it would be normal for me to have looked through the file and seen the photograph that was taken. But frankly, at this point, I don't remember really having seen it or not.

L: What I'm getting at satisfied in her own mind that the photograph produced in Mexico City was in fact Lee Harvey Oswald, whose pictures were all over the papers.

A: All over the papers. And it seems to me that that afternoon or evening when his photograph^s/first began to come out, somehow she got back into the files with the photographs, which

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probably were not identified at that time, and it may be even that she thought she recognized the face, that is the Oswald face as being the face of one of these photographs that she might have been thumbing through, casually, or as a matter of routine as they sent them up periodically from Mexico City.

L: I've seen a picture of the photograph supposedly taken in Mexico City, and the man photographed there, to me, personally doesn't even look like Oswald.

A: That's possible, and as I say, I just don't remember ever having seen that photograph.

L: But she was satisfied with it?

A: She was satisfied, yes. And as I think I've mentioned already, it was considered a coup of some sort for her to have been able to go back and do this so fast. And as I say, I don't recall whether Oswald had already been identified with the photograph. That is, the photograph had been identified as Oswald's photograph -- before the assassination -- through some process of reconciling the telephone tapping with the logs with the photograph^{try}s... in case he had called the Embassy to make an appointment. I suspect that the photograph had not been identified as Oswald's, but that they did have the name on the transcripts. And that this particular name as being an American, naturally they would have started this investigation of him by starting the name traces in headquarters to see what they had on his background. So there must be some documentation somewhere, that is if in fact he had turned up on the telephone taps.

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They would have automatically started an investigation to prepare what the CIA had on the person in order to turn it over to the FBI.

B: O.K. Let me ask you a question. Can you account for the fact reconciled this picture with Lee Harvey Oswald's name having seen a picture of him, say out of the newspaper or whatever, shortly after the assassination, and putting the name Lee Harvey Oswald on the wrong man?

A: That's possible. That's quite possible. If in fact the photograph is not all that clear.

B: The photograph is very clear -- completely the opposite of Oswald.

A: Then I can't explain how they would have thought that that was Oswald. It may be that there was a coincidence in the time the photograph was taken with an appointment having been made by telephone, and that they made the wrong - an erroneous conclusion -- that that particular person was the person who made the telephone call to make the appointment, who might have identified himself as Oswald.

B: Yeah, but see, there's still one point here. If, after the assassination, his name came up, photographs were sent down of him, if it was done as you say, why wasn't it changed?

A: Well, why didn't they back track then and change it -- and say we've made a mistake. I don't know. And in fact, I seem

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to recall that they either had this information, with the photograph and I don't know about the telephone tapping material -- I can't recall that -- but surely the documentation should exist today. And that would have been production of the

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The production files and all the memoranda which was generated by those telephone taps should still be available today. They wouldn't normally destroy these files because they would have to have the basic documentation available for the future when people were doing name checks so that if a person was mentioned in these transcripts, or the reports based on the transcripts, then they would have a reference to go to, as in the case of Oswald for example, or in the case of any of the Soviet diplomats there, because this would all be forming part of the dossiers that they're building up over the years on different people, and different organizations. But what I recall is that they either took the information directly to

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Hoover, or let's say directly to the FBI, maybe they called Sam Papich or _____ at that time was the principal FBI liaison officer with the CIA. He resigned in protest in the early 70's when Hoover cut off all the liaison with the agency. But they would have either, not the Mexico City branch, _____ directly, but if they went to the FBI on it right away, _____ or somebody in the Mexico City branch would have gone down to speak to _____ And _____ the Chief of, I think he was the Chief of the CounterIntelligence Staff Liaison Section, or at least he was one of the officers, he was the principal officer in charge in the Counterintelligence Staff which remember was under James Angleton at the time, for dealing with the FBI. And when _____ would come out to the CIA every day from the Bureau he would always go to _____ office. I don't know if _____ is still around. But _____ was, I

_____ in any case, the procedure was from the Mexico City branch to the Counter-Intelligence Staff Liaison Section where _____ was. And from _____ to the Sam Papich in the Bureau. But I also have a vague recollection that they took the stuff right to the White House somehow, and I don't know how that would have worked. It probably would have gone from the Mexico City Branch to the Deputy Director for Plans right to the Director, and then over to the White House. I have a very vague recollection

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that possibly this was sitting in Johnson's office when he got back from Dallas.

L: But getting back to the photograph -- you reason that from the people who handled it that the photograph had to be taken of the Soviet Embassy rather than the Cuban Embassy -- otherwise would not have handled it.

A: That's not quite true, because in 1963 I don't know who was handling the support in Washington to the Cuban - the operations against the Cubans in Mexico City. was handling those in 1966 when I heard this story and when I got back and started working on the Soviet operations in Washington.

L: dug it out of the Soviet files, right?

A: She could have dug it out of the Cuban files too in 1963, at the time of the assassination, because it's possible that she was working on both of those operations, both of those tasks, in November of 1963. But I don't have an explanation for the failure of in the agency to realize they had made a mistake, once Oswald's photograph was all over the place. If it's so clear that that's not Oswald, then it doesn't make sense that they wouldn't start looking again through all the photographs and try to come up with one that's closer to Oswald's actual appearance. I don't see the explanation, unless they simply, well there's always the possibility^{that}/they're trying to confuse the whole thing and let it pass. Or having done it deliberately, but then there is also

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the idea of not having to backtrack and say they had made a mistake, if they had actually sent it to the White House. Maybe they decided, let's let it go through and not worry about it, if in fact they had him on the transcripts of the telephone. And it may be that they had him on the transcripts of both the Cuban and the Soviet lines -- that I don't remember.

L: Do you know any personnel that would have been stationed there at that time handling that type of work?

A: Well, Win Scott was the Chief of Station -- he's dead now, I think. But the Deputy Chief of Station who would have known about this too was _____ was the Deputy

Chief of Station from about November of 1962 until his transfer

_____ which I think was about 66, or early 67. Because _____, I believe, replaced _____ as the Deputy Chief of Station when

_____ And I was still in Quito when _____ came down and I think he arrived in November, no it was early December I think of 1962. So _____ I think, I'm quite sure, or I'm pretty sure, replaced him as Deputy Chief of Station in Mexico City. And _____ should probably be still around, of the leading figures in the CIA station at that particular time. But it would be a fairly easy thing for me to do, to come up with the names of quite a few of the people who were in the Mexico City Station in 1963.

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In fact, Phillips^{may}/have been there at that time, if I'm not mistaken, I can't remember the exact years when he was there.

But by a simple check of the foreign service list --
lips have

L: What type of job did Phil-/ at that time?

A: I frankly don't recall what Phillips was doing in Mexico City because I didn't get there until 67, and Phillips was long gone, before I got there. Phillips may have been involved in the cover action operations, things like propaganda, or he may have been involved in operations against the Cubans. But I think he, this is in his^{book,}/that is, his responsibility in Mexico City, but it slips me now. I've read his book, but I've forgotten for the moment just what he said he was doing in Mexico City.

B: All right. Let's get back to the photograph. /All you can say is the one person who reconciled the name with the picture out of the file, right?

A: That's what I recall, yes, of what you said.

B: And as far as why the picture was identified as Lee Harvey Oswald when in fact it wasn't, you don't really know.

A: I have no idea, because I was led to believe all along that it in fact was Oswald's photograph. You tell me tonight that it doesn't look anything like him, and this is the first I've heard of this.

L: The photograph produced by the CIA does not correspond with Lee Harvey Oswald.

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- Reference copy, JFK Collection: ESCA (RG 233)
- A: I had always been led to believe that that was considered a very significant achievement on the part of the Agency and for having done that so fast. And so accurately. But now there seems to be some doubt. And it wasn't anything that was particularly secret around the Branch. It was just one of those shop-talk stories that persist over the years.
- L: Mr. Agee, I'd like to draw your attention to the issue of whether or not Lee Harvey Oswald may have been a CIA agent. Do you have any information that might lend lightness on this.
- A: No direct information. I never heard of him having been mentioned as having any operational relationship with the Agency, while I was in the CIA. Of course, I didn't review all the files and if he had, that would have been so sensitive, in 1967 or 66 when I was back in Washington working that I probably wouldn't have had access to it anyway. They would have taken that file and put it somewhere where nobody could find it probably. But, I mean, if they had come out saying already in the Warren investigation that they didn't have any relationship with him, but since then I've met another former CIA employee whose name is Jim Wilco and whose address in California I'll give you as soon as I get back to Amsterdam, and his telephone number I probably have and his home address.
- B: Is he known by any other name?

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- A: Wilcot would have had a pseudonym inside the CIA, just as I had, which is an entirely internal thing.
- B: Would you know that name?
- A: I think I have it on a letter from him. But he'll tell you what it was when you see him, and his job at the time of the assassination was disbursing officer for money, for currency, in the station. And he told me just a couple of weeks ago that he recalled the very day of the assassination hearing comments made by the officers in the Soviet branch of the station, and these are operations officers, not support logistics people like he was, commenting that, "oh, yes, Oswald was our agent and in fact I think Wilcot recalls them using, talking about his cryptonym. Because, normally in all the correspondence, in all the documentation, you never put the agent's true name down, except in very special circumstances. You are always referring to them by cryptonym. It seems that Wilcot told me that he had overheard even mentioning the cryptonym of the man. Now why they would know this I'm not really sure, unless Oswald had been there, and in fact, Wilcot told me that they had talked about Oswald having been trained or briefed or debriefed at one particular period at Atsugi Air Base, or Naval Air Station, I can't remember exactly which it is. Wilcot will give you all the details on this, which was the U-2 base in Japan which had a number of different CIA functions, logistics and that sort of thing, maritime air support. But he in fact became disallusioned with the Agency,

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he was a Kennedyite himself and he was quite shocked at that time by this talk going around station that Oswald actually had been working for the Agency, in the Soviet Union when he went there, or perhaps recruited by the Agency after he had gone to the Soviet Union to work for them in the Soviet Union. I don't think he knows the details, but you would probably have to jog his memory somewhat and maybe even come up with the names and photographs of the officers who were working in the Soviet operations branch of Station at the time of the assassination. Jim would be able to identify by photograph if he can't remember the exact names of the officers who were making these comments.

B: O.K., now when you say "officers", could you specify, are these agents or are these top-echelon people? Are they case officers?

A: Case officers. In the CIA you don't refer to the staff people as agents normally, unless they have non-official cover on the outside. In other words, if they are in the community as a professor or as a businessman or something like that. But/they if really are staff, career people, then you call them staff agents. But everybody working inside the station under official cover, all the case officers, or the operations people, are called officers. And you have communications officers, then you have support staff, such as secretaries and logistics and administration. Wilcot was Finance Officer.

A: How big do you think that Station was at that time?

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- A: He said it was huge. He said they had a couple of hundred people there.
- L: That would be in the Soviet Section?
- A: He would have to tell you, ^{but} I would guess that they might have five case officers.
- B: Oh I see. And these would be the people that would do all the talking.
- A: These would be the U.S. citizen people and
it was a military installation.

I don't recall at the moment, but Wilcot will recall it. And I'm pretty sure that they had moved to that base by the time of the assassination.

L: Let me ask you a question.

A: But these officers that I mentioned are the ones who are going out and meeting working for the agency, and
the station was divided according to Wilcot into several different sections, like, Liaison Section, which is the case officers involved in dealing with
a Soviet section, which is dealing with operations
against the Soviets

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So, it was divided into the different target areas, and in the Soviet operations branch where he recalled that they spoke of Oswald as having been a CIA agent, not officer, but agent, in the managing end of the line.

B: O.K. fine.

L: Did you know Wilcot well enough to evaluate what he told you -- what credence do you put in what he told you?

A: You will have to see for yourself what sort of man Wilcot is. I believed him. I believe everything he says. Jim's hazy on a number of things, now, having been out for ten years. And, as I say, you may have to help him by giving him some names on your own. And in fact, well, you can get those I'm sure. But we can discuss that later, about how you can go about getting the names. But Wilcot, as a person, I think he's very honest, and up front, quite straight. But he may give you the appearance at the beginning of being a little scatter-brained because of his memory problem in trying to recall all these things after so long.

L: Why would he not make this information known?

A: He's tried -- over and over again. He'll tell you the whole story about how he's written this stuff up and tried to get it published. In fact, he even wrote, he's written up the whole Kennedy thing as he recalled it, and he'll probably

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have a copy of it for you, to give you when you see him.

L: Now who would stop him from publishing it -- the CIA?

A: Well, he didn't actually write it up as an article. Do you remember Counterspy Magazine? The one that was blamed for the Welch killing in Greece -blamed in error of course in this attack by the CIA against Counterspy, because Counterspy Magazine which is published in Washington by people I know had been publishing names of CIA people for some time. And, well it's a long story about Welch, let's not go into that at the moment. But Wilcof had written up all of his recollections on the Kennedy affair, and he'd sent it to Counterspy Magazine on the possibility that it might interest them in him doing a story on it. Wilcof is not a writer - but what he did was write up what he could remember, and he's got copies of these, of this, I'm pretty sure, but he couldn't get it published. And he will tell you a whole history of ten years of frustration of trying to do something about the Agency, and the reasons why he became disillusioned with it and quit.

L: That information is dynamite. It seems logical to me that someone would have expressed an interest in following up that type of information.

A: I would think so too. The problem is that he sent it to Counterspy at a time when Counterspy was folding and they weren't answering their mail and they were just disintegrating

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as a group, and the magazine wasn't published after a period of time.

B: Let me ask you another question. I don't know if you can answer it. Now, if he had this information, and he wanted to do something about it, why didn't he present this information to the Warren Commission?

A: He was still in the CIA at the time... and he didn't leave the CIA until about 1966 or 1967. In fact, he had wanted to stay but when he talked to station security officer -- no it was his boss in the Finance Division -- about staying, resigning and continuing to live became very clear that the Agency didn't want him to resign and continue but that they wanted him to go back to Washington. And a veiled threat was made that they could keep him from getting a work permit if he in fact resigned and tried to stay there. So he went back to Washington and was back there for about a year and was then assigned to the Miami operations base about 1965, because he from 60 to 64, roughly, 64 to 65 back in Washington, and then 65-66, down in Miami. And that was the heyday of the operations against Cuba, you know.

B: Now, so we don't go too far-- he got out of the CIA in 1967.

A: I think 66 or 67, yes.

B: If my memory serves me correct, wasn't the Church Committee at that time active?

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A: No, the Church Committee wasn't established until 1975.

B: O.K. I'm off.

A: But Wilcot has many stories to tell you. He wrote up his memoirs twice, and they disappeared both times, and he's not a paranoid person, believe me. Yes, and he was living in, at least in one instance, in a commune and it turned out that one of the people in the commune was a spy -- one who has later on been revealed in these investigations -- in some court case I think he was eventually revealed as a prosecution witness.

L: Spy for our country?

A: Spy for the FBI, I think, or the CIA, I can't remember which. But Wilcot can tell you -- he has a saga of ten years of trying to get the stuff out and not having anyone listen to him. And on the Kennedy thing, he not only sent that memorandum, I think, to Counterspy Magazine, he was also working with another magazine, I think it's one that is published on the coast, about trying to get it published too, and I don't know why they didn't do anything about it either. It could be because he wasn't able to be specific enough about the identities of the people who were doing the talking. And he had no way of going back and checking and trying to get their names again, or what not. But I would think that in working with him, you would be able to go back to the CIA somehow and get names and photographs and help Wilcot recall who was talking, so you could then talk to those people directly.

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A: And Wilcox was a person as I say was not really a, in my estimation, any sort of person given to flights of imagination or paranoia or dishonesty or anything else. I think he's quite honest.

B: O.K. At this time we will take a short recess.

* * *

O.K. At this time after a short recess we're going to terminate this conversation and we shall reconvene at approximately 9:30 a.m., January 12, 1978, same location.

* * *

B: Interview resumed, at 10:40, same location, present are the following -- gentlemen, would you give your names please.

L: Harold Leap, Staff Investigator

A: Phillip Agee.

B: And I'm William Brown, Staff Investigator. This is a continuation of the conversation and interview that we had on January 11.

A: The question arising here is the standard operation procedures for the CIA's interviewing of defectors, and of other people traveling in Communist countries. First of all, it ought to be pointed out that in every foreign country or foreign capital wherever there is an official mission of any of the Communist countries, there is also on the American side, what is known

CIA officer, could be the Chief of Station or it could be

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the officer in charge of operations against the Soviets, or against the other Communist missions if there happens not to be a Soviet Embassy there.

be prepared at all times to handle securely any defector who

so that once a Soviet were to show up there would be a standard procedure for handling him, that is for calling a certain person

and to handle all the things involved in keeping him safe and perhaps on occasion allowing him an interview with the Soviet Ambassador if that were requested; and eventually getting him out of the country.

Tape stopped -- then continued . . .

O.K. we continue.

essentially be responsible for the handling and the initial debriefing of the Soviet defector or ^{defector from} any other Socialist country, and getting them safely to the States. Now, they

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And this procedure normally would be followed with whatever of the Communist countries/^{the person}would come from, whether it was Cuba or Soviet Union or Poland, and what I don't know is whether this procedure would be followed in the case of an American who had defected to the Soviet Union and then tried to re-defect to the United States. Because our considerations, and this is the period of the assassination and probably of the period when Oswald re-defected in 62, although I wasn't working until 64 on Soviet operations. But I would think that in 62 when Oswald went back to the Embassy in Moscow and said he wanted to go back to the United States, and when these arrangements were being made and he was being interviewed in the Embassy, and when it turned out that he hadn't in fact renounced his U.S. citizenship properly, or he still had it, I would certainly think that he would be interviewed by one of the CIA people in Moscow and that certainly after he got back to the United States, given the fact that his 201 file was already opened for two years, ^{if} it was opened in 1960 ,

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to me its inconceivable that someone wouldn't go to Oswald from the CIA and try to debrief him and ask him questions about what he had told the Soviets and the military would be interested in this too. . . what he had told the Soviets, any other information which might be of value to the Agency. Now there is a section - there are different elements I can think of very quickly - in the Agency which would be quite interested in talking to Oswald. For example, the Counter-Intelligence Staff would be quite interested in knowing of ^{had} any contacts he/had with the KGB,

was merged with the Eastern Europe Division in the middle 60's. But people working on the KGB would certainly want to talk to Oswald because if Oswald had defected to the Soviets and if he had, whether or not he was a bonafide defector or not, and under whose control he was, that's another matter, but in any case, the people ^{in the Counter-Intelligence Staff} (that's Angleton's old office) would have been very interested in talking to him because it would be assumed, I think, that if he had defected to the Soviets, and had told them the ^{that} things/he was threatening to tell, that it would be to the KGB that he would tell all these matters. And ^{they} would want to know, they would have hundreds of questions for him on who

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he dealt with, where they did the debriefing, what he told them, the descriptions of the people he was in contact with, the languages they spoke, all kinds of questions about where they took him, and how they handled him. And to me it's inconceivable that once he got back in the United States even tho the initial conversations with him in the Embassy in Moscow may have occurred -- I don't think that's quite clear yet who the people were that he spoke to, what the content of the conversations were, but certainly they would have talked to him in the United States. They would have approached him anyway, to try to get his cooperation, to talk. Now, if he had gone back into the Embassy in Moscow and had said I want to go back to the United States, and he would have to have said quite a bit ^{in order} to get this loan of four hundred and some dollars to get back, and to enlist that support that eventually occurred in his efforts to get back to the States and to take his wife with him. Then I think that they would some long conversations with him, even in Moscow and I don't see how the CIA people would have been excluded from those conversations. That the conversations would have been exclusively ^{with} the Consular Officer, for example, or with the Political Officer who had nothing to do with the CIA. I would think that if he went into the Embassy to have a meeting to discuss his personal situation that there might have been two or three people

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in on the meeting, not just one. They would have had a Consular Officer who looks after the affairs of American citizens in whatever country, they would have had probably a Political Officer at the Embassy, ^abonafide State Department Officer, and they would have had a CIA officer. And the three of them would have been in on an interview with Oswald. Conceivably, the CIA wouldn't have been in on it at the very beginning, but then would have received a copy of the memoranda written by the other people who had interviewed Oswald and, I don't know if its clear yet how many times he went to the Embassy and how many interviews occurred during that period before he left, but that should all be part of the record, and these things should be part of the State Department correspondence.

L: Would that be in Oswald's 201 file?

A: It should be in Oswald's 201 file, definitely. Can you fill us in as to how that 201 file is handled, its construction?

A: Yes. Starting first ^{though} with the State Department traffic on the case because if it is a matter of a person, an American citizen going back to the United States after there had been ^{some} question of whether he had resigned his citizenship or not, whether it was done properly, this is a citizenship case and it is dealt with through the Consular section of the Embassy. Now, the embassies have chronological correspondence, both as to pouch and as to

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telegram, and during that period, if someone were to go back and check the whole chrono file, as opposed to try to check just under the name of Oswald, then there might be pieces missing from the chrono section, if there was an attempt at any time to excise important information from the file, but I would think that the Moscow Embassy, still on the State Department side, had to file either telegrams or airgrams, which is pouch material, back to Washington about this American who has turned up and who wants to go back to the United States and asking for instructions, because I don't think that the Post has the authority to pay out \$435 or so without approval from Washington. I may be wrong on that, but I think that is one thing that would need approval. Giving the visa to his wife would be another thing that needed approval. And I think I read in this book that Immigration and Naturalization opposed the visa for his wife at the very beginning, but that they ceded, I don't know when, but later on. So, there must be a lot of information in the Department of State on the case, quite apart from the CIA. Now, if the CIA file was opened in 1960, then all of the purely State Department traffic between Moscow and the Department should also be in the CIA 201 file... because naturally, if the CIA had a file open on the man, then they would have informed the Department of State that they wanted everything that was State traffic on the person, because the Agency 201 files include a lot of material which is not

*to find
State did
all it.*

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CIA material, properly speaking. It originates with other agencies, and the CIA, it comes through the paper mill in the CIA and eventually is assigned to a certain 201 file or project files or subject files, ^{or} whatever other files.

B: Can I ask a question. O.K. If Oswald was working for the CIA in any capacity and they had a 201 file on him, is it possible for a person who knew the inner operations of the CIA to look at that 201 file and determine through some code word or whatever that he was a person being used, say as an employee, or ^{as} an informant, or whatever, is it possible for them to look at that 201 file and read some type of code to show that there is an additional file on this particular party?

A: There is a good possibility that that could be done. And it depends on the type of documents that are in the 201 file that you have. Now, normally when a person is an agent of the CIA, not a staff officer now, but an agent like Oswald would have been, let's assume that he was sent to the Soviet Union as a defector, or that they tried to recruit him after he had defected. Because they might have tried to do that too. Then they would have had two files on the man. One is the true name file and one is the cryptonym file.

Now, the true name file includes all the documents that refer to the person in true name, but nothing which would

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refer to him as being of operational interest or of operational exploitation by the CIA. All of that would go in the cryptonym file and there would be no mention in the cryptonym file of the true name, and if you got the cryptonym file, and read it, you should not be able to identify the person as to true name. So that all the correspondence that ^{would} go between a field station and headquarters by pouch for example, or by cable, would be in cryptonym, so that if the documents were ever lost, let's say an aircraft went down and the pouch were lost and the Soviets or someone else got them. Then if there was a dispatch on a particular operation, the operation couldn't be identified from the contents of the document because there would be cryptonyms in strategic places all through the document, which would conceal the true identity of the persons and organizations referred to in the document.

B: O.K. I understand that. But, someone, I would think, would know, there would have to be something in there, say for instance, I was a high official in the CIA, O.K., and I have the cryptonym file. There must be some way to reconcile those two files. There must be a key in there somewhere.

A:

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is whether or not there is in that file at the very beginning, well first of all, the very first document that goes in the file is the request for the opening of a 201 file, because Records Integration Division of the Clandestine Services (or what used to be the DDP) assigned all the 201 numbers, so there was a form which the desk officer in charge of the case would have to fill out and send to Records Integration asking that a 201 file be established on a particular person. And they would give the true name. A copy of that would be the very first document in the file. Now, what would follow from that would be the true name documents which would be largely or, I don't mean largely, but certainly all of the State Department Traffic on Oswald ought to be part of the true name 201 file. But one of the very first documents

if he was being cultivated, or assessed over a period of time, it doesn't have to be too long a period of time, for recruitment as an agent, there would be in the 201 file, what is known as Part One of the Personal Record Questionnaire., known as PRQ. And in the

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true name file it's PRQ Part I. This is a document of about five pages or six pages which is a form all the way through with boxes and the boxes are all filled in and ^{each of} the boxes are numbered. And they're all filled in, starting with the true name, the date and place of birth, name of the father, the name of the mother, and then it goes on and on about the full biographic record of the person. It includes all of the employment history of the person, it includes the person's educational background, all schools they attended, addresses for the last five years, name of the wife and background on her, each of all the children and when they were born. It is a very detailed questionnaire on basic biographic data on the person. It has a section for hobbies, for example, it has a section for, I was thinking of vices, but that comes in Part II. Anyway, that's Part I. Now in the cryptonym file, because right after the assignment for true name, then the cryptonym would be assigned, and then they would open a separate 201 file with the same 201 number under cryptonym.

L: Would that Personnel 201 file indicate the second 201 file was opened?

A: No, it wouldn't necessarily. But you wouldn't open, you wouldn't use a PRQ, Part I, normally, unless you were going to use a PRQ, Part II.

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file would have been opened at that time.

A: Yes

L: Have you ever heard of an instance where a 201 file was destroyed?

A: No.

L: Never?

A: Never. Now Oswald came back from the Far East to the States before he was discharged, right? I don't know whether I have here the year he was, he came back.

L: I'm guessing that he was probably there in 57, something like that.

A: But the 201 file, if it was opened in 1960, the coincidence of dates is important because if they were going to use him in any way in an operational capacity, and if this started while he was at Atsugi, then / ^{the} 201 file should have been opened then.

L: There's no record that a 201 file existed prior to 1960.

A: Now, there is also in the 201 file, in the basic document, which is filled out to open the 201 file, there is a reason given. But that would be in the cryptonym side. But I think that if it's just a true name file, remember that not all 201 files have the cryptonym part, that is the separate cryptonym operational file, so that you would have to take a review of the true name 201 file, or whatever they've given you, whatever you ^{can} get, to get an idea of whether that was just a true name file and nothing else, or whether there was a cryptonym file also, made at the same time, or even later. But that

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the existence of the PRQ Part I is key because that would suggest if there was a PRQ Part I, that there was a PRQ Part II filled out by someone and put in a cryptonym file. But as part of the clearance process within the CIA, which follows the opening of the 201 file and the assignment of the cryptonym then there is a whole bureaucratic procedure which is called operational approval

and there are a number of forms which have to be brought together and filled out by the officer in charge of the case, and then he sends it to the CI staff and they then review the documents and determine whether he should be given operational approval or not. Normally, a new agent of the CIA will be first given

And that is normally good for six months. And during that six month period, the operational approval office of the Counter-Intelligence Staff requires additional information on how the case is going, or when some information in the past was not available, they will hound/^{sometimes} the desk officers to keep them up to date on how its going. And there is a natural clash between the desk officers handling the cases who want to use these agents and the CIA staff people who take a different point of view and are trying to prevent penetration of CIA operations by agents under hostile control, or agents which are

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shaky from one point of view or another.

and there was this natural tension between the desks who wanted to use these agents as much as possible, in some cases with the counter-intelligence office which was taking a very jaundiced view of most cases. They had to be skeptical about cases, that was part of their job. So in the true name file there ought to be cross references to certain documents which would appear in the cryptonym file. There wouldn't be very much in the file -- it would just say "see the document" -- all documents have letter and number designations and a date in such and such a file, for cross reference.

L: You stated that never to your knowledge have 201 files been destroyed for any reason. Now, going back to Tokyo, would it be possible for the military intelligence units to recruit Oswald, under the full knowledge of the CIA. See, there's two stories that don't jive. CIA operational officers recognize Oswald as being an agent, they seem to remember his cryptonym. So how can that be, with no 201 file?

A: Well, I think you said there is a 201 file but it is what is equivalent to a true name 201 file, or one of those 201 files on people who were not operationally used, but who were of interest in any case to the agency.

L: Opened in 1960.

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- Reproduced from the holdings of the National Archives II (RG 233)
- A: Yes. There will be many 201 files in the CIA on people of interest who have never been in any operational situation with the CIA. And this is simply because the 201 file being the basic personality file, would be used both for the agents and also for any other particular individual of interest.
- B: On that line, let me ask you, is it normal procedure when they open a 201 file, to have a photograph of the party in question?
- A: I'm pretty sure, yes there is a section, one of the boxes on the first page, of the PRQ Part I has a place for a photograph, almost the passport size photograph, and that's not always possible to get. But in the places where I worked, we would get these from the government identification files because most countries in Latin America for example, have the national identity card system, and they require photographs. Sometimes these get way out of date and you get a photograph which is 20 years old

- B: In the case of a person like Oswald an American, and he's got a passport, right, so it shouldn't a problem to obtain a picture of him?

- A: No problem at all. In fact, he would have - it would be available from the military services, because they too have photographs. But getting back to the operational approval system, there ought to be, if in fact Oswald ever worked for the agency, there

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ought to be plenty of documents because first of all they do name checks throughout the agency on the individual in, of interest. The PRQ Part I, the PRQ Part II, would be the first documents, and at the same time they would start the name check process. And the name check process is also done by form - it's called name check form, I think -- and it is sent to Records Integration Division in the Deputy Directorate of Plans, which ^{is} the central reference office. And they would also do what is known as a green list check. Now nobody ever said what the green list check was, or green list request, because it was something separate from RID, or Records Integration Check. And in Records Integration, I'll get back to the green list in a second, they have these thousands and thousands of cards, or I suppose it's all computerized now. But you put in the name of the person and someone would go through checking all the references ^{under} / that name, and they began to mechanize this in the 1960's. And you would have the date and place of birth also. And you would, in the form for the name check, advise the analyst or researcher in RI Div just what you wanted. Whether you wanted every person with that last name, or whether ^{you wanted} / only people with the last name, first name, second name, date and place of birth. In other words, you could make the name check wider or narrower, for the analyst ^{who was going} / to do it. Then you would get back photocopies of all of the indexed cards, which the researcher ^{who} had been able to retrieve. And as the officer in charge of doing the name

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check you would then go through each card and check off
 with a green pen/- this is in the 60's - those that you
 wanted the hard documents on. Because the index cards
 sometimes have an extract of what was on the document
 about the person, or would have very little. So you wouldn't
 be able to tell. So in those cases where you couldn't tell
 and you wanted to see the actual hard documents, or you
 saw from the excerpt that you wanted to see the hard docu-
 ments, ^{then} you would mark that with a green check mark and send
 this photocopy of these index cards, because they'd be placed
 one two three four like so, down the photocopy and you might
 get four five six pages back, ^{on a person} you might get twelve pages, you
 might get zero, but then you could ask for the actual hard
 documents which referred to the person. And I would think
 that in the Oswald 201 file if they were checking him by
 true name, then they would obviously put that documentation
 in the true name 201 file, so you would find there the results
 or the request and the results of the name check under true
 name which was part of the process.

B: These 201 files are kept in Washington?

A: Yes. There are several 201 file systems, and there is an
 official one which is the one which is never destroyed.
 But there are also field 201 files which more or less

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duplicate the Washington 201 files. But you need a working 201 file for every case.

B: Right. at the time of the assassination, was in Washington, is that correct?

A: Yes.

B: O.K., so she had full access to Oswald's 201 file.

A: Excuse me a second for interrupting, but the 201 files are the responsibility, every permanent basic file of the DDP at the time was the responsibility of the RID, Records Integration Division. Now on a desk like the Mexico City desk an officer could request custody of the 201 file. Now RID resisted this because they were always afraid documents were going to be lost and that the person in charge of keeping the file in proper order would slough off and not do it right, but any desk could request from Records Integration permanent custody, or temporary custody, of a 201 file, or any other of the basic permanent files of the Agency. Now on the desks often a working file would be opened on a particular individual, or operation, or organization, which an officer would keep in his safe. And it would not be the permanent, basic RID file, perhaps, ^{because} see, because we did not want to have the responsibility for that. Because all of the documents in the DDP are assigned a certain file number, whether it's a 201 file or whether it's any of the other types of files that I can explain to you if you want to hear it later.

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RID
that this was the/copy of the document, because the document might have six copies, and of those six copies, one or two or whatever could go in the working file which the officer would keep at his desk if he didn't actually keep the RID file.

And there the people would put the appropriate offices to which this document should go, according to the content of the document. All this was done by the RID analysts when a document might come in from the field or from any other place. And they would attach, of course, additional copies of the document and then the people interested in it could detach for their working files copies of the document and then route along, send along, the RID file, I mean the RID copy, and make annotations in the margins

and there was space there for anyone to write comments to the next person down the line on the case. So these documents then at the very bottom it would say RID and then the file number, so that the document would eventually get back to the file where it would be permanent record and that would never be destroyed.

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- L: Let me ask you a question. In light of the information we have now, according to Wilcot, Oswald was an agent in Japan for the CIA. In light of the fact that the CIA did not open a 201 file till 1960, how do you interpret this?
- A: I don't have a good explanation for that. Let me see when ^{actually} he/went back to the United States from the Far East.
- L: We know that he was in the Far East during his military time, which was in the neighborhood of 1957 - or 58.
- A: Yes. I'm just looking -- well in any case it's, he gets back to the United States before the 201 file is opened.
- L: That's correct. He defects to Russia before the 201 file is opened.
- A: Yes, he goes to Russia in October of 59. That's two instances before ..
- L: Yes, now how do you interpret this? What's your personal opinion? Then the information that we're getting from Wilcot is inaccurate, or do you think that something high happened to a prior record?
- A: There may have been a prior record, which conceivably could have been doctored or altered to make it look as if it started only in 1960. There might be ways of analyzing different documents to see whether there's a chance that that had happened. But my guess is that after he had defected to the Soviet Union, the agency might have tried to recruit him in the Soviet Union and they are constantly on the lookout through all kinds of travel control operations.
- L: Well, in light of that, if that had happened, then he would not have been an agent in Japan in the period around 1957.

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- A: Not when he was at Atsugi, no. But what Wilcot said to me was that he had overheard the Soviet Operations officers, that is Soviet Operations Branch Station, after the assassination, commenting that Oswald had been a CIA agent in the Soviet Union and mentioning some, I think a cryptonym, that he had had.
- L: Then it wouldn't have necessarily been the time that he was stationed in Atsugi.
- A: Not necessarily. And naturally the CIA is always looking for American citizens, residents for one reason or another in Communist countries to try to find out why they are there in the first place for counter-intelligence purposes, and secondly, to try to recruit them as reporting sources from within those countries. And there is a memorandum on the Oswald defection from November 1959.
- L: Well, his case officer, if he was recruited in the Soviet Union, his case officer would have been in Moscow, he wouldn't have been in Tokyo. So if they had knowledge of that in Tokyo, it would have had to have been when Oswald was in Atsugi.
- A: Not necessarily. Because of this. If Oswald was recruited after he was defected to the Soviet Union, then there would have been officers involved in Moscow on the case, and there would have been officers involved in headquarters in the case. And the officers were telling Wilcot about it in 1963, or early 1964 may have been officers involved in the

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form I mentioned, of request for opening of the 201 file. So you should be able to find out who that person is, and go back and ask him, "Why did you open the 201 file?".

B: O.K. Let me ask you one other question - just for point of information. Is there any way that say a person working in the Soviet Branch would have information or could receive information or would know anything about agents, employees or whatever, working for the CIA, say in the Moscow Branch?

A: You mean working for the CIA in the Soviet Union?

B: Right. Yes, these people know the agents who are working anyplace else?

A: It's quite possible because it may be that if they had a secret communication system between Oswald and the agency on the outside, he might have had a secret writing system to report through the mails to some letter drop in Tokyo, for example.

L: Would they utilize Oswald through a cut-out, through another agent? Say, a journalist was in the Moscow area.

A: A journalist was used in the Penkovsky case, so they do use journalists as cut-outs.

L: Could possibly Oswald have reported through this journalist?

A: Yes, of course.

L: And never make contact with the case officer.

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A: And they try not to ever have any contact inside the Soviet Union with a person working there. One of the operational procedures

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L: So they would use a cut out man in the Soviet Union?

A: Normally they would use a cut out. If at all possible, they would try to meet the agent outside the Soviet Union, and there were cases that I knew of this, where the person would be able to travel from time to time, and meet with the CIA case officer under secure conditions, but outside

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the Socialist countries.

L: Well, Oswald wouldn't fall in this category -- so it had to be through someone else.

A: There was something I wanted to add quickly on the question of the 201's. The fact that a cryptonym is assigned to a person doesn't mean necessarily that that person is an agent, or under consideration, for recruitment as an agent. For example.

had a cryptonym for Castro at the time ^{60s.} this was during the 19/ So, they will refer to people sometimes by cryptonym, cryptonyms will be assigned to people and used in operational traffic, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the person is a recruited agent or is under consideration for recruitment. So there is another pitfall that should be avoided...if it turns up that Oswald had in fact been assigned a cryptonym. On the other hand, it could be a case that they are simply monitoring, and not directly involved operationally. So I think the key is to find out why the 201 file was opened, whether there was a PRQ Part I, whether there was a PRQ Part II, and if there was a PRQ Part II and if there was a cryptonym file, aside from the true name file, then that is very suggestive that they were at least considering him for recruitment in the Soviet Union, if not eventually recruited.

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- L: Well thank you very much, Mr. Agee, for consenting to this interview. Can you think of anything else we need to cover?
- B: Let's go over a few of those questions and see if he can answer any of them.
- A: Well, I think I mentioned this before, but, with respect to this question two again, the agency would be very interested in monitoring the presence of any American citizen in any of the Communist countries/ ^{for possible use.} So, I think as he defected in 59, late 59 I think, the first memorandum I saw here is from the Defense Department in late, I think it's November 1959, they probably sent a copy of that memorandum to the agency on Oswald's defection. This is November 3, 1959. And the agency, possibly in early 60 or sometime, opened the 201 file on him, if in fact, he had not been recruited before he went and there wasn't all this cover up with the changing of files. And then they would set about to find out what he was doing there, why he was doing it, whether he could be recruited, and all of that.

All right, question three, the CIA received a cable on 3 November 59 -- oh this is the very same thing. ^{From} /the U.S. Navy Attache in Moscow reporting Lee Harvey Oswald has offered to furnish Soviets information on U.S. radar, what was the reaction, and would this/ ^{normally} be grounds for opening a 201 file.

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B: Well, this we want your own opinion on.

A: I was just looking to see in the book. It says the Defense Department memorandum, but what probably happened was, well you would have to see from the file, the Navy Attache probably reported to the Defense Department in Washington, in this memorandum, then what he reported was passed over to the CIA in memorandum form or a copy of this cable. I think we discussed this last night. I think the reaction would be that they would open a 201 file and they would then begin to consider what damage he could do having served at Atsuge including the U-2 flights Wilcot can tell you more about what was happening at Atsuge, but I believe that they had a

in the Far East, like to Taipei or to Southeast Asia, and to Korea. And so Oswald may have known things about what the CIA was doing at Atsuge in the late 1950's which would have affected CIA operations. So the counter-intelligence/^{people}in the Soviet-Russia Division, at that time, as well as in the counter-intelligence staff, which was the Angleton operation, would have been very interested in knowing, assessing the damage that Oswald could do against CIA operations.

L: Is it standard operating procedure for the State Department or any agency to obtain information that an individual has

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in which some officer in the counter-intelligence staff working for Angleton would have had to be the action officer on all the matters relating to the case, or whether the Soviet Bloc Division should take the case. And that would have been the result, that would have been decided in conversations between the interested parties, at the time the memorandum came over from the Department of Defense.

L: Would they leave that up to the military intelligence to assess the damage and just keep them aware of it, appraised of the developments, rather than them opening the 201 file and doing it themselves. Would they leave that to military intelligence?

A: Not if Oswald had been working at Atsugi Air Base.

B: I still haven't got the answer to my point, the point I'm trying to make is, O.K., they're notified, they have a meeting, they decide what they're going to do, O.K. Is it possible, or is it normal procedure for them to start some action prior to opening a 201 file. See, what I'm getting at, there is that time lag.

A: Yes, I don't think so. I think there is a very key point here and that is to find out when this 201 file was opened. How quickly after ^{the November} 59 memorandum, because one of the first things you have in any work of this sort in Washington is a file, a place to put papers, and a permanent record of what's been said. You have to have memorandum of conversation, you have to have memorandum of meetings that were held,

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opened a 201 file immediately. I don't have any explanation for the lag. Unless, there was another file, something like a working file, or a one of the other types of files which are held in the agency, other than 201 files, which they began to put the documents in at the beginning and then later on decided he merited a 201 file, which may have been after they decided they were going to try to recruit him.

B: So in other words, you're saying the 201 file is not the first file that can be opened; they can have another file exclusive of the 201 file.

A: Yes.

B: In other words, they can have files on people, or agents or whatever, without having a 201 file.

A: Yes, and in this clearance process, for example, I mentioned earlier that in addition to doing the checks in the Records Integration Division of the then DDP, normally one would also do a green list check. And as the officer doing the check I never knew what the green list meant, but I have a suspicion that maybe that green list referred to files kept on the letter intercept operation that had been going on for so many years. Remember the letter intercept in New York, in San Francisco and for a time in New Orleans, that came out in the Rockefeller Investigation and the others. It may well be that the green list which obviously since it was called the green list, and it/hush-hush, nobody told you what green list meant,

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it may be the green list had to do with these thousands and hundreds of thousands of index cards from the letter intercept program, of letters going back and forth to the Soviet Union. But there were the green list files, of course, which were quite apart from ^{official} 201 files, and maintained completely apart. Then, also on a person like Oswald, they would, if they had operation interests, they would do what is known as a national agency check, and they would ask the FBI, the military services, the local police wherever he happened to have lived, and I don't know, such other government agencies as kept files on people, security files... for anything they might have on the individual. This is known as a national agency check, and it is to get out of all the other security agencies or police agencies what they might have on a particular individual. And that goes together with the RID check, and green list check and whatever else is turned up on a person. It all comes together in documents which are then sent to this operational approval section of the ^{counter-}intelligence staff. But these checks are usually made in true name, would have to be made in true name, so they would be part of the 201 file if he was under consideration for recruitment. And it's just possible that the memoranda or other documents relating to Oswald from November 1959 to December 1960 ended up in some other file, like a project file. And I'll explain

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what project files are in just a minute...instead of, in a 201 file. But then when they decided that they might want to try to recruit him, then they would have a 201 file opened. They would put such and such documents in the true name section, then they would have the cryptonym assigned and have a cryptonym file where they would put the PRQ Part II, and all the other matters relating to operational use of the subject.

B: Fine, O.K.

A: But it is difficult to read a true name 201 file and get a sure clue that there was a PRQ Part II or that there was a cryptonym assigned or that there was a cryptonym section of the file.

B: O.K. It's difficult, but not impossible, because somebody in the agency knows when they read a 201 file there has ^{that} gotta be a key in there that tells them/there is another file other than Part I.

A: Right. And I can give you one suggestion on that. All of the cryptonyms, I think all of the cryptonyms, relating to Soviet, that is to, agents reporting from the Soviet Union, or to Soviet defectors, for example, to matters relating to agents working against the Soviet Union

B:

A:

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forgotten now, but I had to deal with these Soviet cryptonyms at a certain period of time, and if you took a list of all

cryptonyms, and had their 201 numbers next to them, then you could go down the list with Oswald's 201 number and look for that 201 number alongside a cryptonym.

B: Fine, now that's a key. O.K.

A: And it would be a long search, but if you narrowed it to a certain period of time like 59 to the time he came back to the States maybe, or even afterwards, but let's say 59 to the time of the assassination, then you might come up with a cryptonym which had a 201 number similar, I mean exactly the same as the 201 number in the true name file that you get.

B: And that's the one thing that is constant. The 201 number stays throughout.

A: The 201 number won't change. I don't know of any case where they ever changed the 201 number. But you can, there are different ways to check with RID, for example. They have these machine listings, for example, which they would do by, they could do a machine listing on every 201 number in the agency ever assigned. Now, we would get occasionally, update machine listings of true names, cyptonyms, and 201 numbers. And, I think these would come